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Stoneham author asks

Is there a UFO Cover-up?

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By JIM ROUILLARD

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood
Make...each particular hair to stand on end
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

William Shakespeare,
"Hamlet"

The U. S. Constitution provides Americans with many rights — not least among them the freedom of speech and the guarantee of a free press.

But what about the people's right to know: to weigh and judge evidence on a particular issue and to form conclusions therefrom?

Barry Greenwood of Stoneham, astronomer and author, raises this and many other questions, in relation to a topic which many people, apparently including the U. S. Government, consider a bizarre, even untouchable subject: Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs).

Greenwood's book, "Clear Intent: The Government Coverup of the UFO Experience," is set for publication this week by Prentice Hall.

Now, armed with provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for assaults on the government's "paper curtain," and thanks to exhaustive research of thousands of pages of government documents by Greenwood and his co-author Lawrence Fawcett, the public is able for the first time to study sample sighting reports of UFOs, review memos and learn what happened in 1975 when U. S. missile bases and nuclear storage facilities were visited by unknown craft. For the first time, also, the public can examine the rare photos of UFOs and peculiar animal mutilations which supplement the text.

"Clear Intent," according to the publisher, offers startling yet concrete evidence that the U. S. government has for some time known about and covered up the existence of UFOs. The authors stress that, contrary to public statements for the past 30 years debunking UFOs, the government believes the phenomenon to be real and, in some cases, a threat to national security.

Greenwood, who has been involved in UFO research for 21 years is archivist, historian and Middlesex County director for the Massachusetts Chapter of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON). He holds associate memberships in the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Astronomical Society.

His library in Stoneham houses one of the three largest collections of UFO material in the world, he said (far more than the Library of Congress) and in "Clear Intent," he and Lawrence Fawcett offer a tantalizing glimpse of the U. S. government's current attitude toward UFOs.

According to Dr. J. Allen Hynek, astronomer, astrophysicist and advisor for the film, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind:"

Fawcett and Greenwood have made revealing use of documents which show that the CIA and NSA (National Security Agency) protestations of innocence and lack of interest in UFOs are nothing short of prevarication...For the government to maintain that UFOs are nonexistent in the face of the documents already released, and of other cogent evidence presented in this book...is an insult to the American people. For...'if there are no UFOs, why all the secrecy?' "

Prentice Hall describes the book as "unprecedented," and, most importantly, "allows readers to draw their own conclusions about the existence of UFOs...an option that until now, may have been obscured."

Claims of UFO sightings are by no means new. In fact, according to "Clear Intent," a copy of a chapter of a textbook formerly in use at the U. S. Air Force Academy indicates the UFO phenomenon "appears to have been global in nature for almost 50,000 years...This leaves us with the unpleasant possibility of alien visitors to our planet, or at least of alien-controlled UFOs."

Though the chapter cautioned that the presence of aliens on the planet is "difficult to accept," it also stated that we should keep an "open and skeptical mind" on the subject of UFOs.

Fifty thousand years of the UFO phenomenon? Whatever the source of that Air Force Academy's textbook claim (extrapolations from historical accounts and far earlier archaeological records, perhaps?), there have been more recent claims of sightings, some very close by.

One such claim out of Worcester County, is recorded by John Winthrop, first governor of Massachusetts Bay, in his "True History of New England," in 1638:

"In this year one James Everett, a sober, discreet man, and two others, saw a great light in the night at Muddy River. When it stood still, if flared up, and was about three yards square; when it ran, it was contracted into the figure of a swine: it ran swift as an arrow towards Charlton, and so up and down about two or three hours. They were come down in their lighter (boat) about a mile, and, when it was over, they found themselves carried quite back against the tide to the place they came from. Divers other credible persons saw the same light, after, about the same place."

And Marion Starkey ("The Devil in Massachusetts") reports many colonial accounts of visitations during the witch frenzy of the late 17th century — interpreted by the then-Puritan magistrates and divines as works of the devil.

One Samuel Wardwell of Andover, according to Starkey, confessed to the magistrates that he had met with the "Prince of the Air," who had "sworn him to covenant for 60 years and baptized him in the Shaw Shin River."

Aliens? Devils? Witchcraft? UFOs?

Many of the most recent sightings reported in "Clear Intent" bear some resemblance to the Winthrop record, specifically in terms of light, shape of the object, velocity and versatility of maneuver. But colonial accounts are not nearly so voluminous as the flood of reports from the last 30 years.

Greenwood said it has been his and Fawcett's aim to conduct studies of reported UFO sightings in a "nuts and bolts, facts and figures approach to research and evaluation of available data."

From the authors' conclusion:

"We have tried to give a rational assessment of UFOs. Old questions have been answered and new ones...raised. To be sure, UFOs have not been given a fair day in court, which is why the subject remains cloaked in rumor and ambiguity. Some scientists are aware of the challenge placed before us, but the scientific community at large must shoulder some of the blame for the way the UFO phenomenon has been treated...Indeed, some of the criticism is well-deserved. Serious UFO researchers were, for some time, a small minority in a subject dominated by religious fanatics, pseudointellectuals, and a variety of space explorers, whose alleged trips to 'lush, green Venus' and the marvelous cities on the far side of the moon titillated millions."

"Clear Intent" is a fascinating read. It aims to remove the shroud of discredit which Greenwood says still clings about the subject, from a variety of causes: hoaxsters, national tabloids with screaming sensational headlines — "I Gave Birth to a Space-Alien's Baby," and the bizarre, the fanciful and the sheer fantastic of cinema: "Them," "Invasion of the Body-snatchers," and even, "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes."

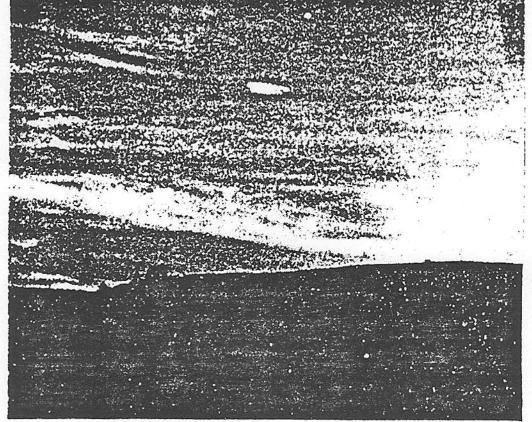
The aim of "Clear Intent" is not, like Hamlet's tale, to frighten the reader, to freeze his blood or make his hairs stand on end with accounts of humanoids and animal mutilation, Barry Greenwood said, but rather to bring UFO research to the light of the day.

He said the U. S. Government's attitude seems to be: "When it's explainable, then we'll talk about it," yet he believes that the American public should be participants in the discussion and speculation on the UFO phenomenon — and wishes that the government would give the American people greater credit for having the intelligence and maturity to weigh the available evidence and form their own conclusions about it.

"Freedom of the press," according to the American Institute Forum, "Is accepted as the bedrock of a free society on the premise that only an informed public can effectively govern itself."

But freedom of the press cannot be sustained without the right to know the available facts, Greenwood said, which is just another way of saying, to paraphrase Roy Neary in Steven Spielberg's "Close Encounters of the Third Kind:"

"We just want to know what's going on."



UFO OR CLOUD FORMATION? A New Zealander, Lou Blackburn, according to press reports, took this slide on October 27, 1979, in Motunau, N.Z., in hopes of getting a good shot of his friends' fishing boat. The boat, he said, was in deep shadow when he made the shot, and the slide was a disappointment. Later, someone noticed the cluster of white in the sky and forwarded the slide to a UFO research team.

(CUFOS photo)



"Clear Intent"

STONEHAM AUTHOR AND ASTRONOMER Barry Greenwood holds a prepublication copy of his book, "Clear Intent: The Government Coverup of the UFO Experience," due on the bookstands this week. Next to Greenwood are just a few of the books and manuscripts which he said comprise one of the three largest collections of UFO source material in the world.

(Jim Rouillard photo)